

Rewald case

The coming trial here of Ronald Rewald is going to make national news and be important locally.

The public has a major interest in knowing details in this case, where Rewald is accused of defrauding hundreds of investors, most of them in Hawaii, of some \$22 million. He is charged with 96 counts of fraud, tax evasion, perjury and securities violations in connection with the July 1983 collapse of his investment firm of Bishop Baldwin Rewald Dillingham & Wong.

FOR THAT reason The Advertiser has joined others in protesting the federal government's proposed gag order that would prohibit attorneys, witnesses and others involved from discussing the case. Reporters would also be barred from talking to lawyers and court personnel during breaks in the trial.

Now there is a need to balance the defendant's right to a fair trial with the right to gather and publish the news. But there are also much better and fairer ways to balance those

interests than by putting prior restraints on free speech and restricting media coverage. Furthermore, defendant Rewald and his attorney have both opposed the gag order.

It's true that there has been a great deal of pretrial publicity in this intriguing case, but that has involved both sides and is not the central point now. In any event, once a jury is selected its members will be instructed not to read or listen to the media.

WHILE THE case may involve some embarrassment for the CIA, that itself is not commanding. There are ways national secrets can be protected, and that seems especially so if any Rewald connection with the agency was marginal, as the government says.

The real value of attorneys and others discussing, within legally defined bounds, an ongoing case with the media, and vice versa, is to provide a clearer picture for the public. That value should not be lost in this major case.

Uganda's coup

It's almost *de rigueur* for military coup leaders to promise democratic elections. So it was in Kampala earlier this week when Uganda's armed forces commander, Lt. General Tito Okello, was sworn in as president to replace ousted civilian leader Milton Obote.

Time will tell whether Okello keeps his promise to hold free elections within a year for Uganda's 14 million people. At present the odds are against it, given the many problems that the new government of this landlocked African nation faces.

POLITICALLY, Okello, a member of the Acholi tribe, is likely to face continuing opposition from other tribes and from National Resistance Army guerrillas, who fought against Obote but have rejected the new regime.



Milton Obote
Ousted leader

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